things you said over the telephone by Browneyesparker

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Summary:

He and Eleven have often whispered about how cute Dustin and Max would be together. Their own relationship is still undefined, ambiguous at best. She tells him secrets in the dark and he tells her stories about kings and queens to chase away the nightmares. There are kisses and slow dances and hugs that last too long to be just friends. They are forever in a grey area but it doesn't stop them from trying (unsuccessfully) to set up their friends with other people.

things you said over the telephone

Author's Note:

> There's just a bit of mild spoilers. But just a name, for the new character they cast.

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things you said over the phone

why do i keep running from the truth? all i ever think about is you, you've got me hypnotized, so mesmerized

"Max likes Dustin!" Eleven announces on one of the rainy Saturdays they can't spend together, she plops down on the couch and sits cross-legged, tucking the phone between her chin and shoulder.

"Oh? How do you know?" Mike asks with interest.

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"She told me," Eleven says, interjecting into his musings. "Except you're not supposed to tell anybody else because it's a *secret*."

Mike pauses. "Wait. It's a *secret*?"

"Yes," Eleven answers.

"Secrets usually mean you can't tell *anyone* at all," Mike informs her.

Eleven nods even though Mike can't see her. "Yes," she replies. "Max might have said I couldn't tell anyone. But I'm sure she wasn't talking about *you*. She knows we tell each other everything."

“I’m pretty sure she *doesn’t* want me to know,” Mike answers. “I’m one of Dustin’s closest friends. She’ll probably think I’ll tell him or something.”

“I know you won’t,” Eleven tells him loyally. He is a faithful keeper of all her secrets and she trusts him with her life.

“I dunno. . . Dustin has been wondering if she likes him as more than a friend,” Mike answers playfully.

Eleven’s eyes widen. “Michael Wheeler, you *wouldn’t* dare!”

“I just might!”

Eleven panics just a little, wondering if these are one of the times he’s joking and wishing she was in the same room as him because she can’t gauge his expressions. One of the things she is good at is reading his faces.

“You wouldn’t!” She repeats nervously.

“Don’t worry,” Mike assures her, suddenly serious. “I won’t say anything but maybe next time somebody tells you a secret, you shouldn’t tell me.”

“But I *like* telling you things,” Eleven answers.

Mike beams. “I like telling you things too,” he replies.

“Oh yeah? You and the guys had a sleepover last night too. Does Dustin like Max?”

“It didn’t come up,” Mike says. “But Lucas thinks the new girl is pretty.”

“Is that a secret?”

“He didn’t tell me not to tell anyone,” Mike teases. “Besides everybody thinks Reeda’s pretty.”

“Even you?” Eleven asks, a little jealously.

“You’re the prettiest girl at school,” Mike replies, always knowing the right thing to say to her. He changes the subject back to their friends. “Hey, maybe we should try and get Dustin and Max together.”

“Mmmh, that never works,” Eleven answers. “Remember the last time? Dustin freaked out and Max and I wound up seeing *Girls Just Want To Have Fun* while you and Dustin saw *Cat’s Eye*. Let’s just face it. We’re not like Emma!”

“Emma?” Mike repeats, getting whiplash from the way she changes subjects so quickly.

“Jane Austen,” Eleven replies. “It’s a book I’m reading for school about this girl who tries to match everyone up and it all goes wrongly.”

“What happens?”

Eleven sighs. “I don’t know. I haven’t finished it yet. But Emma is sort of a mouth breather. Come to think of it, she’s a terrible matchmaker. She made a lucky guess *once* and. . . .”

She stops, realizing she is rambling about a subject that probably doesn’t interest him.

“Eleven?” Mike asks.

“Sorry. I was talking too much.”

“It’s okay! Talk as much as you like! I-I love hearing the sound of your voice,” Mike says sincerely.

“*Seventeen* magazine says not to talk about stuff that doesn’t interest your cru--” Eleven trails off. “Never mind. So, what are we going to do about Max and Dustin? It’s so obvious he likes her too.”

“Don’t you hate it when two people can’t get their crap together and tell each other what they’re really feeling?” Mike asks.

“Because you wouldn’t know it to look at her but Max is really actually shy.”

Mike laughs, remembering the days when he first knew Max and how she took charge when they were searching for Eleven. “If you say so.”

Eleven smiles. “Why are you laughing?”

“Well, Max is anything but shy!” Mike replies. “You should have seen her when we were looking for you. She was a force to be reckoned with. She still is!”

“Well, maybe she’s shy around boys she likes!” Eleven tells him, slightly put out.

Mike laughs some more. “Maybe she’s afraid he won’t like her back!”

“She is,” Eleven confirms, lowering her voice. “But *that’s* a secret too!”

“Eleven!” Mike tries to be annoyed with her but he can’t, he’s going crazy with love spells. He has to be careful not to blurt out *I love you* or *I like you*.

They’ve both said *I like you* before but it was in a different context. To placate hurt feelings, to calm fears and wipe out jealousy. If he says it now, it will be different. It’ll mean something more than *just friends* because Max does not like Dustin *just as friends*.

“Mike? Are you still there?” Eleven asks.

“Yeah! I’m still here!” Mike answers hastily.

“I’ve got to go and help Jonathan with dinner. The Chief’s coming over tonight,” Eleven tells him. “He likes my mom, you know. That’s supposed to be a secret too.”

“Everyone knows they’re dating,” Mike assures her. “They’re not doing a good job at hiding it. And I overheard my mom telling my dad that she thinks they’ll get married.”

“Yeah. . .” Eleven sounds blissfully happy. “It’ll be great! Ugh! Jonathan’s calling me now. I’ll talk to you later, Mike! Try and think of something to get Dustin and Max together. Okay!? ‘Bye!”

“Talk to you later,” Mike answers. “I like you!” he tacks on at the end.

She laughs, still completely oblivious to what he means by it. “I like you too!”

“Yeah?” Mike asks.

“I like you *a lot*,” Eleven says.

Mike blushes. Maybe she does realize what he means by it. But he won’t dwell on it. They have friends who they need to help realize are perfect for each other.

And they’re still young.

Their day will come.

Eventually when he’s a little braver and surer of himself. Not of the way he feels though, never of the way he feels. That is the one thing he knows more in the world. That and it’s time to give Dustin a call because it’ll make Eleven happy knowing their friends are happy.

And that will make Mike happy.

End

Author's Note:

> I don’t even know what this is but I had fun writing it amidst NaNoWrimo and my sister’s starting to recover from her surgery. I hope you guys enjoyed it and that you will tell me what you thought.
>
> I am in in the middle (?) of a massive Christmas story about Mike & Eleven right now. It is also my NaNoWrimo (National Novel Writing Month) project. But never fear! I am going to continue to write and post in this collection. December we will be taking a break though.
>
> The song I used in this is “Crush” by David Archuleta

for no other reason than I think it kind of fit the story even if it doesn't.

Until Next Time!